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HUGH EVANS 80TH BIRTHDAY ISSUE

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Hugh Evans

California gardens fifty years ago did not contain by any means all of the material seen in them today, and many beautiful plants to which we have become accustomed and regard as everyday subjects so to speak, have only been with us for a few years, comparatively speaking. Some which are seen now on every hand were represented not so many years ago by just two or three specimens in the whole region. All of the Bougainvilles except *B. Sanderiana* and *B. spectabilis* were introduced fairly recently, as were Burmese honeysuckle, *Oxera pulchella*, *Beaumontia* and many other flowering vines. Relatively new among trees, most of the dwarf flowering Eucalypti, several *Erythrinias* or *Corals*, *Stenocarpus* (the Fire-Wheel tree) destined to be widely planted, several *Ficus*, etc., etc. Among shrubs *Chamaelaucium* (Geraldton Wax Flower), several *Abelias* and *Calliantras*, *Cassia splendida*, several *Correas*, and *Escallonia*, many new *Hibiscus*, and many new and striking Araliaceous plants of which *Trevesia* and

Tupidanthus are notable and aristocratic representatives. None of the above mentioned were on hand fifty years ago and many are newcomers. New *Roses*, *Fuchsias*, herbaceous and annual plants are far too

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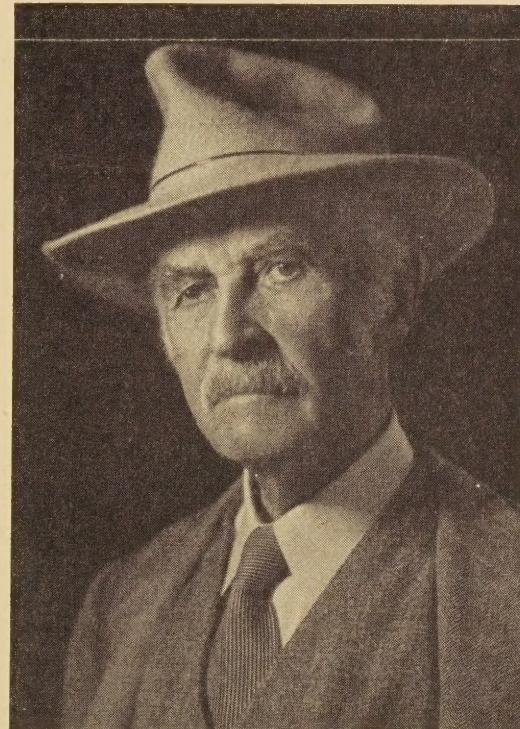
THE FIRST 80

"A gifted horticulturist, blessed with a happy combination of wit and great kindness, a learned mind and an understanding heart." That is the description of Hugh Evans by a person who has known him intimately for fifty years. The horticultural world knows him best as the introducer of more, and more interesting, plant material to Southern California gardens than any other single individual in recent years; one of the most beloved and respected of our plantsmen.

Born in Stamford, England, February 14, 1874, he came to California in 1892 at the ripe age of eighteen, to put to practical use the knowledge that he had acquired in an English agricultural school. After ten discouraging years of ranching in San Diego, the continued droughts and unfavorable markets forced him to give up and he moved to Los Angeles, where he started a nursery business in 1903, subsequently selling out to the well known Theodore Payne, who still conducts that business today.

He entered the real estate field where his later success as a subdivider enabled him to indulge his hobby of collecting and growing rare plants. His extensive gardens in Santa Monica soon became the Mecca of horticulturists from

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THE FIRST 80

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many parts of the world and a center of interest for students in this field. Trips were made to the South Sea Islands in search of exotic material and plants from literally every part of the globe were brought here to Santa Monica to be grown and evaluated to test their suitability for Southern California conditions. Evans Gardens, as it was then known, came to be recognized as probably the most notable private botanic garden in the west.

In order to disseminate economically all this material and make it available for California gardeners, it was inevitable that the enterprise would sooner or later have to be commercialized; so in 1935, Mr. Evans formed a partnership with Mr. Jack W. Reeves, formerly of the Beverly Hills Nurseries, and thus was born Evans & Reeves Nurseries at the present location. The present organization is carrying on the same tradition of seeking out and introducing meritorious plants suitable for our conditions.

It is rather startling to realize that so many of the things that we take for granted in our gardens, we owe to the enterprise of this one man. To list them all would take pages, but some of the most familiar would be the Princess Flower, Tibouchina semi-decandra; the Powder Puff Flower, Callianдра inaequilatera; the Geraldton Wax Flower, Chamaelaucium uncinatum; many of the Bougainvilleas, Hibiscus, Coral trees and dwarf Eucalypti; in all, over a hundred new additions to western gardens.

The esteem in which he is held by other horticulturists is attested to by the number of plants that have been named after him by other growers; a Fuchsia, a Cymbidium Orchid, a Sasanqua Camellia and just recently, a new Bougainvillea. In 1951, he was awarded the Silver Trophy of the California Association of Nurserymen for horticultural merit.

The making of gardens is for him still the finest of all pursuits and he himself quotes as an indication of his philosophy the following lines from Francis Bacon: "God Almighty first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirit of men; without which, buildings and palaces are but gross handy-works; and man shall ever see that, when ages grow to civility and elegance, man comes to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection."

Rhyme in Season

Take your bow and take your arrow,
Little guy with happy eyes,
Span the earth just like a sparrow
From your vantage in the skies.

In this age of turbulation
When greed seems to domineer,
You can strengthen world relation
And make unrest disappear.

Shoot the young and shoot the old ones,
With your missiles from above,
Shoot the timid and the bold ones,
Spreading universal love. G.F.H.

Winter Wonder

To lead off with we'll admit that *Ternstroemia japonica* is not a rare plant—for one thing, it's been in cultivation for at least a hundred years—but we've been watching a selected group of "red" seedling plants which have qualities much superior to the type, and unlike many garden dependables, these *Ternstroemias* are really at their very best right now. The colder it gets the better they look!

The special virtue of these seedlings lies in the beautiful mahogany red color of the foliage, infinitely more attractive than that of the normal *Ternstroemia*. A good crisp block of these plants in gallon containers has so caught our eye every time we pass that we felt compelled to bring them to your attention.

Ternstroemia japonica is an evergreen shrub of moderate size and growth with glabrous (glossy) oval leaves about two inches long by half as wide, and curious but uninspiring blossoms. It is a cousin of the commercial tea plant and the botanist whose name it commemorates died two hundred years ago.

Ternstroemia is no problem child for the garden—not cranky about exposure or soil, no special tricks are involved in its successful culture. Only \$1.50 for these cold season gems which in the winter make most other plants look unhappy by comparison! M.E.

IT'S TIME FOR . . .

The Big Spring Feeding for the entire garden — any time after February 15, the most important fertilizing period of the year. Heavy rains have leached out any existing nitrogen. Many plants are turning yellow from long chill air, cold ground and wind, and from other accumulated adversities. Fertilizers which have been used here and there during short daylight hours and cold nights have been only half effective. So now at the beginning of spring we must feed practically everything. Either start at one end of the garden and go on around until finished, or begin with the yellowest subjects first.

What to use and how much perhaps no two growers will agree upon. The important thing to remember is that a FERTILIZER HIGH IN NITROGEN is imperative at this season. Ammonium phosphate contains 16% nitrogen, Sulphate of Ammonia 21%; Grorite pellets 11%. Blood Meal 13%; Descanso 25%. We suggest that for this project you ignore Sulphate of Ammonia and Blood Meal — UNLESS USED IN LIQUID FORM. Certainly you can't beat Ammonium phosphate or Descanso. Grorite, though a trifle mild for the year's first feeding, is particularly good if you are the too-generous type. Ammonium phosphate should be applied at the rate of two pounds to 100 square feet well worked into the soil, or one-quarter cup to a shrub of five gallon size. Another good spring recipe, which we called your attention to last spring, is one ounce Irontone, three ounces Epsom Salts (Magnitone), one ounce Ammonium sulphate, all to three gallons of water.

If your ground is inclined to cake on top, by all means mulch — with equal parts of steer manure and Georgia peat and half a part humisite. Plants that particularly show nitrogen need include Hibiscus (which haven't been fed since October, we hope), Bamboo, Citrus, Bougainvillea, Murraya, Xylosma, Philodendron, Bananas.

Plantwise, it's time for deciduous **Oriental Magnolias**, (\$6.50 to \$20); the **Pink Horse Chestnut**, *Aesculus carnea* (\$7.50, bare-root); the **Flowering Peaches** (from \$5.50); **Flowering Crabapple**, dark leaved or not (\$4, up) and **Hawthorne** (*Crataegus Autumn Glory*) for the experimental (\$5.50).

P.E.C.

Hugh Evans

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numerous even to attempt a description.

There is nothing more interesting than to procure from some far region plants or seeds of some new thing perhaps long sought, to watch the germination (if they do germinate) and to regard anxiously those minute and fragile green objects, on which all our hopes and fears are centered, looking forward to the day of their prime and beauty.

A talented and learned horticulturist, now alas no longer with us, used to maintain that we already had enough plant material without introducing any more. Surely this is not so; we cannot stand still. Mexico, Central and South America still have an abundance of plants which would be happy here in California — plants of all kinds from palms to herbs — and so, too, have Africa and the Australasian countries. China has, I suppose, been more widely searched for plant material than any foreign land, but yet the late Ernest Wilson brought back from there literally thousands of new species and present day collectors are still adding to the list.

It goes without saying that some of the material we seek to acclimatize will not succeed. We have to be steeled to disappointment and disillusion in this matter of plant introduction and acclimatization, but success with one new and praiseworthy plant makes up for a dozen disappointments. The true plantsman is like the Athenians in St. Paul's time, he is always looking for something new, nursing an unconquerable hope.

PLANTS OF THE MONTH

BIRTHDAY BOUQUET

As we surveyed nursery and garden for "the plant of the month," we were amazed to see the many plants, currently in flower, introduced to local trade through the efforts of Mr. Hugh Evans. Flowering now as a sort of birthday tribute, are **Chamaelaelium uncinatum** (Geraldton Wax Flower); **Calliandra inaequilatera** (Pink Powder Puff); **Thunbergia Gregorii** (orange - flowered vine); **Epidendron O'Brienianum** (red bedding orchid); **Brunfelsia calycina floribunda** (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow); **Beaumontia grandiflora** (Easter Lily Vine).

Visit our garden to see Mr. Evans' plants of the month!

FOR YOUR INSPECTION & SELECTION

exotic Oriental Magnolias now:

- M. **Campbelli**—large pink flowers when mature.
- M. **Dawsoniana**—large rose-violet flowers white within, when mature.
- M. **Veitchii**—shrub or tree; profuse rose-pink flowers.
- M. **stellata**—shrubby; early, slender-petalled white, pale pink flowers.
- M. **stellata Water Lily**—pure white, many-petalled flowers.
- M. **denudata**—blooms young, best foliated, pure white, fragrant flowers.
- M. **Soulangeana Alexandrina**—early; rose inside, white out.
- M. **Soulangeana amabilis**—purplish, opening to white.
- M. **Soulangeana Lennei**—late; balloon-shaped, ruddy purple flowers.
- M. **Soulangeana Lennei alba**—cup-shaped, white flowers.